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¹⁷⁵ intimate relations with some of them. The adults in our congregations have been heathen themselves and have practised the rites on which I questioned them. They can describe them better than raw heathens, as they now stand at a certain distance from their old life and can judge of it more independently. They possess what our French historians call *le recul nécessaire*. Enjoying their full confidence, having learned by long practice how to put questions in order to get impartial answers, I think that their testimony can be considered as scientifically reliable. Of course errors are always possible. But science proceeds by successive approximations. I dare say the present monograph of the Thonga tribe, compared with my book *Les Ba-Ronga*, will be a nearer approach to the truth, and it is quite possible that later on a more perfect account will be given by somebody who has had more time to spare and more insight than myself into this delicate work.

¹¹⁵ When a historian publishes a monograph, he first gives a list of his sources of information. He vindicates the truth of his results by showing that they are based on trustworthy documents. My documents are not books. They are living witnesses, and I beg to introduce some of them to my readers, as they have been my faithful collaborators and I owe to them most of my knowledge.

The first man whom I questioned systematically was a Ronga of Nondwane (North of Lourenço Marques) named Spoon. He had been my butterfly catcher and I had often admired his skill and his powers of observation. He became my instructor in the art of bone throwing. He had been more or less a diviner, using his dice when going to hunt; but after the war of the Natives against the Portuguese (1894-1895) he lost confidence in his divinatory bones as well as in his gods, and became a Christian. He always had a great deal of imagination. I was often obliged to verify his explanations. Spoon certainly had the mythological sense more developed than any of my other informants; however he was through and through a Bantu and whatever he said was always picturesque and striking. He died in 1924.

After him, I undertook to gather all the knowledge possessed by Tobane. Tobane was a splendid man when I knew him in Lourenço Marques, in the years 1895 and 1896. Tall, of a remarkably light complexion, his eyes very clear and bright, he was a man of mark in the

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Mpfumo clan. From his youth he had been in relation with the leading families of the tribe, being himself the son of Magugu, the Native general who brought to an end the long war of succession of the Shangaan in 1856-1862. He had been mixed up in all the political affairs of the country for a long time and had a profound knowledge of the customs of the court and of the tribunal amongst his people. He was a patriot, and when he became a Christian he did his best to



Phot. P. Barthod.

Spoon

as bone-thrower in 1904.



Tobane

bring his brethren to his new faith. When he understood what I wanted, he at once did his best to satisfy me and sometimes even anticipated my questions: "Tjika, ndi ku byela... Keep quiet, I am going to tell you", he would say eagerly! I owe him most of what I know about the tribal system of the Rongas.

Having then been called by the development of the Mission to leave Lourenço Marques to start a training school amongst the Thongas of the Transvaal, I met in Shiluvane near Leydsdorp with a man who was, as regards the Northern clans of the tribe, an authority as excellent as Tobane for the Southern Ronga clans. His name was Mankhela. He was an elder son of Shiluvane, the late chief of the Nkuna clan, and had been for many years the prince-regent of the Ba-Nkuna, till the actual chief Mubhabe came of age. Mankhela was the General of the army, the great doctor of the royal kraal, one of the main councillors, an entirely convinced bone-thrower, a priest in his family, a Bantu so deeply steeped in the obscure conceptions of the Bantu

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115 mind that he never could get rid of them and remained a heathen till his death in 1908. Very kind hearted, very devoted to the missionaries, he was a true friend to me and willingly disclosed to me the secrets of his medical and divinatory science. I owe to him an account of his bone-throwing system, which was much more elaborate



Mankhela

Phot. H. A. Junod.

standing in his village by the magic forest gate.

than the one Spoon had given me in Rikatla, though the two agree on the main points. Mankhela had many dealings with the Suto or Pedi clans of the N. E. Transvaal. He was a celebrated rainmaker and had the greater credit amongst them as he was a foreigner. I have been on my guard carefully to differentiate what is of Sutho origin and what is purely Thonga in the information he gave me.

115 In my congregation at the station of Shiluvane was an old convert baptised, odd to relate, by the name of a professor of divinity of Lausanne, *Viguet*. He was a clever man, but not always a very good Christian, I must confess. He possessed a splendid memory. Having been headman in a village of Thonga refugees in the Spelonken, he gave me valuable information regarding the mysteries of family life as well as about the initiation ceremonies. His home was Tsungu on the Limpopo but he had moved to the Transvaal during the succession war of 1862. He was certainly a first-rate informant, possessing a clear head, always using the technical expressions and illustrating his points with great skill. He and Mankhelu have taught me most of what I know about the Northern clans. I learned however many other facts from *Mauweve*, the poet-laureate of the Nkuna court and from *Simson Gana*, one of my pupils who belonged to an old and important family, and also from others.

115 In 1907 I came back to the coast to start in Rikatla (18 miles North of Lourenço Marques) a Training Institution for our work in Portuguese Territory. There I again found my old friend Spoon, who had been baptised Elias and was one of the elders of the little Church; he had grown old, but was still of the same merry character and disposed to communicate anything he knew. Another man was his co-elder there, a Ronga of the Mazwaya family called *Mboza*. I found him to be a very intelligent man, quite an authority on the rites of the clan. He had been "possessed" and had gone through all the initiation ceremonies of the Ngoni possession, having become an exorciser himself. So he was able to give me new information on this mysterious subject. I undertook a systematic investigation with these two men in 1909, taking as a guide the set of questions prepared by Prof. J. Frazer for people collecting ethnographical material, and giving special attention to the question of the taboo. During this study, which took me many months, I was more than ever impressed with the immense complexity of the life of a South African tribe!

115 In quoting my sources of information I must also mention the pupils of my school. Every Tuesday night we had a meeting in which one of them had to relate a story, to describe a custom, to tell a Native tale... His companions then added what they knew, and as some of them were grown up men, these debates were often very instructive.

126 I was able to collect in all more than one hundred tales; most of them have been published in my *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga* and

5) THE TYING OF THE COTTON STRING.

854 When the child "tiyelanyana" viz. "becomes a little firm,"
857 the mother, having to plough her fields and to cook the food, begins to seat him on the sandy soil, after having made a kind of hole of about five inches in depth. We have seen Thonga babies already sitting at the age of two months. But this "dumping" hardly meets all the requirements, and the mother looks for a girl to help her to take care of the baby (wa ku tlanga na ye, to play with him). She puts the child in the charge of an elder sister or a cousin; a girl of five to ten is quite strong enough for the purpose. I have often admired the patience of these miniature nurses, sometimes not very much bigger than the child they carry, with their very troublesome babies.

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115 But very soon the child begins to crawl (kasa) and this is the time when a very striking rite is performed. This rite seems to be practised all over the tribe, but it has more importance in the Northern clans than amongst the Ba-Ronga. I shall here give the description of Viguet, who belonged to the Tsungu clan and had emigrated to the Spelonken. My readers must forgive me if I cannot tell the story with all its details and if I am obliged to write some of them in Latin (1).

851 These are the ipsissima verba of my informant: "This is a great law amongst the Thongas. When a child begins to crawl, even before, the *puri* is tied round his waist. The *puri* is a cotton (2) string. Father and mother fix the day; if they forget to do so, their parents, (the grandparents) will remind them of the law. They must have sexual intercourse, but in such a way that the mother will not become pregnant, s. n. i. (Annotatio 2)¹. The mother will have to take in her hands "their filth" (thyaka ra bona) smear the string with it and tie it round the child. It will

(1) A more complete description of this rite and of some others related to the taboos of the Thongas will be found in the *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, Oct. 1910, Paris.

(2) There are plants of cotton probably spontaneous in the Low Country of the Transvaal of Delagoa Bay.

1 [See note in these categories or in 116-Analyse]

881 the metallurgic art and introduced domestic fowls into the country.
 177 All these facts tend to show that they have had intimate relations
 663 with Semitic peoples, and they themselves declare that they came
 — from the North by sea and reached the coast after shipwreck.
 Now they practise circumcision with great assiduity and hold a
 special position in the lodges of the Spelonken. They are called
 there the masters of the Ngoma (1). Circumcision is wide-spread
 amongst Semitic nations, and one might be tempted to infer from
 these remarks that the custom has been taught to the Bantus by
 Semitic masters. This is certainly true as regards the Ba-Venda in
 the Spelonken (2).

In South Africa the Ngoma is much older than the arrival of
 the Ma-Lemba (which can be fixed some time during the XVIIIth
 century). What happened in Spelonken, through the agency of
 the Ma-Lemba, during the XIXth century, may have taken place
 at some earlier date in the case of other South African tribes,
 and the Semitic origin of the Ngoma is quite possible, though
 there is no proof at present extant.

2) GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CIRCUMCISION RITES.

881 I am treating here of the rites as they are met with amongst
 175 the Thongas of Spelonken especially; my informants on this point
 — have been Viguet, who was initiated some 60 years ago, and
 Valdo, a much younger man, who went through the rites 30 years
 ago; both are from Spelonken. There Thonga and Bvesha (Sutho)
 candidates enter the same lodges. A boy named Pikiini revealed
 to me the secret formulae as they are recited amongst the Nkunas
 881 (Leydsdorp). The rites certainly vary amongst the tribes and they
 seem to have been simplified in late years, but there is a general
 resemblance between them all. Pedis have two circumcision

(1) I note in a paper by the Rev. W. A. Norton on the puberty rites of the Basuto (S. A. *Journal of Science* March 1910) that, if a Bushman is in a lodge, he takes precedence amongst the Suthos and that there circumcision is derived from the Bushmen just as it is from the Ma-Lembain the Zoutpansberg.

(2) See my paper on the "Balemba of the Zoutpansberg" *Folklore*, Sept. 1908 and also, "Zifiti," my South African novel. Chap. II. (Saint-Blaise, Foyer Solidariste).

IV. Marriage ceremonies in the Northern clans.

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~~584~~ I have succeeded in getting the whole description of the Nkuna marriage from a very good and clear-headed informant, Simeon Gana. It is somewhat different from that of the Rongas.

584 Here is the resumé (1) of the whole sequence of these rites :
The betrothal visit. (Ku buta). The suitor arrives with his shangwane and an old man who will act as his official representative or go-between (ntjumi). He has already made his choice, and the ntjumi at once woos the girl in his name. Her father calls her apart and asks her if she consents. If she is disposed to say yes, she begs to speak with the boy. She chooses a provisional shangwane. They are both shown into the hut of the girl's mother with their respective shangwane. Let us suppose they come to an understanding ; the suitor announces his success to his ntjumi, who goes to the girl's father and informs him that she has consented. But the father refuses to accept this notification ; he must also choose a ntjumi. This is done the same day. The following day, the two parties meet each in a different hut and the first ntjumi again comes and repeats the whole story, the second ntjumi being present.

Then a long discussion takes place (between the grown up people) as to the lobolo. This discussion is conducted by the two ntjumi, who go constantly from one hut to the other, the one conveying the questions : "How many oxen do you claim, etc", the other going in his turn to give an answer. So the two parties never see each other during this disagreeable debate about money. When they are agreed, the suitor and his friends return home and the ntjumi receives £ 1 for his assistance. There is no other *tjekela* than this. The word *tjekela* is unknown in Nkuna.

The fiancée's visit. As soon as they have gone, the women of the village begin to prepare pots of beer for the lobola feast. But

(1) I have explained these rites in detail in a novel entitled *Fasano*, published in *Le Semaine Littéraire*, Geneva, Nov. & Dec. 1910.

765 A man who transgresses the law of continence before the lahla khombo is said in Ronga to have "crossed the village" (a tjemakanya muti). He has taken the mourning (nkosi), the misfortune (khombo) upon himself. He will have sores all over his body and will begin to cough (consumption).

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[115] Amongst the Rongas, it seems also that the *bugango* is prohibited in mortuary villages during the marginal period. The men even prevent boys going to the villages to see their girls, says Mbekwa, an old inhabitant of Nondwane.

VI. Family rites.

765 After two or three months, a first gathering of the whole family of the deceased takes place. Amongst the Ba-Ronga its function is to close or break down the mortuary hut. Amongst the Northern clans, no relation is established between this family gathering and the fate of the hut. But everywhere its principal aim seems to be to restore the family whose head has been removed by death, and which must be reorganised.

1) AMONGST THE BA-RONGA.

For the Ba-Ronga the habitation of the deceased is tabooed. It is a *shira* (grave), as well as the place in which he has been buried and, for this reason, it must be destroyed. But this destruction is not accomplished at once. Some time must elapse (1), two, three, nine months, before the family gathering takes place. I witnessed it near Rikatla on December 15th 1907 and can therefore describe this rite in detail.

Manyibane had died five or six months previously. He was

(1) At any rate, such is the old law. But nowadays the Rongas sometimes crush the hut at once during the five days to save trouble. This was done in the case of Seku.

A. REMARKS ON THE TABLE OF TERMS OF
RELATIONSHIP IN TEN SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBES
OR SUB-TRIBES (APP. IV)

~~115~~ Some particulars as to the way I obtained the lists contained in this Table may interest my readers.

First of all I would express my gratitude towards the late and much regretted Rev. F. Bridgeman, who compiled the *Zulu list*, and to the Rev. R. Godfrey, to whom I owe the *Xosa list*. I could hardly have found more competent collaborators for the Zulu-Xosa group.

The *Chopi tribe* is settled on the border of the Indian Ocean, from the mouth of the Limpopo up to Inhambane. A considerable number of its members have emigrated into the Lourenço Marques district. One of them, belonging to the Zandamelan clan, gave me his genealogy and explained to me the *Chopi system of relationship*.

As regards the *Suthos of Basutoland*, my informant was Neftali Motswenen, the assistant of Dr. Hertig, in Morija, in 1915, and the list was kindly revised by my friend the late Rev. E. Jacottet and by the Rev. P. Ramseyer.

The *Khaha tribe* is a portion of the Pedi population of the Northern Transvaal. I spent some years in the neighbourhood of its chief, Maaghe, who was staying near the Mission Station of Shiluvane, and owe my information chiefly to a young Khaha named Malupi, who was one of my pupils (in 1906).

During a prolonged visit to the *Venda country* in 1920 I met an intelligent Native called Shifaladzi who did his best to disclose to me all the mysteries of the customs of this interesting tribe, especially its kinship system.

As regards the *Tongas* in the neighbourhood of Inhambane, I got my first information from one of them living near Rikatla; the list was later on submitted to Mrs. Keys, the wife of an American missionary, who kindly completed it as far as possible.

The *Ndjaos*, also called Ba-Nyai, live further north, between the Sabie River and Beira. One of my neighbours in Rikatla belonged to that tribe and gave me an intelligent account of their family life.

I cannot guarantee the absolute completeness of all these lists. There are blanks in some of them, either because my informants failed to find the proper term or because that term does not exist or has been

115 forgotten (especially in Basutoland). It may also be that some mistakes have been made, and I must apologize if such is the case. However I give this table as it is, after having done the best I could, knowing, as I said in my introduction, that Science proceeds by successive approximations and hoping that it will be a useful stone in the building up of African ethnological Science.

194 As regards the spelling of all these words, I have followed as well as I could the system used in the books of the different languages. As, however, there is a deplorable multiplicity in the orthographic systems of South Africa, certain signs have not exactly the same value in all the columns. It is impossible to avoid this drawback, but it is of minor importance, my first aim being ethnographic and not linguistic. In Thonga I render by *ps* the sibilant *s* which is represented by *s* with a circumflex in the Thonga-Ronga books, and by *tj* and *dj* the cerebral *t* and *d*. I employ indiscriminately *b* for the strong *b* which is more common in Ronga and for the soft *b*, represented by *v* in Thonga-Djonga books.

The Rev. P. Schweltnus has kindly transcribed most of the Khaha terms collected by me in the orthography recently adopted for Pedi books. Thus the letter *g*, when found alone or after *k*, represents the greek *γ*, a hard fricative guttural, whilst *g* associated with *n* corresponds to the nasal guttural *ng* in the English "singing" (*n̄* in Thonga). The cerebral *t* (*tj* in Thonga) is represented by *c*. In this form the kinship terms do not entirely agree with the Khaha pronunciation. The Khahas have a tendency to soften many sounds (*dz* instead of *ts*, a kind of *d* instead of *tl*). I have adopted, however, the official Pedi orthography, as it is inadvisable, from a practical point of view, to preserve all the peculiarities of less important dialects or semi-dialects.

In the Sutho orthography *kh* corresponds to the Pedi *kg*; *l* before *i* and *u* represents a sound intermediary between *l* and *d*, also present in Chopi, a soft cerebral *d*; in Pedi it is written *d*. This sound occurs in the feminine suffix *ali* (Sutho), *adi* (Pedi) often met with in kinship terms (*ati* in Thonga, *azi* in Zulu, *adzi* in Venda). *O* and *u* are used both in Sutho and Pedi for the semi-vowels *w* and *y*. *Ch* in Sutho is pronounced like *tsh* in Thonga and Zulu.

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of its meat with all his relatives-in-law. Then both will be allowed to eat together. Until that present was made, it would have been impossible. In this clan, a future son-in-law does not eat at all with his bakoñwana until the marriage is concluded, and this rule is sometimes observed till he has given "the ox for communicating together." Amongst the Zulus it is said that a mother-in-law will never eat with her daughter's husband. In the Khosa clan the custom of lessening the avoidance taboo by offering a present to the mother-in-law also exists. The son-in-law will one day bring a plate of food to her with his gift put on top of it. She will accept it and eat together with him. Then it will be possible for these two persons to "djungulisana" i. e. to tell each other the news of the day when visiting each other's village. But when this monotonous recital is finished and concluded, as is customary, by clapping both hands, this must be done with care, and not in a hurried fashion, as when speaking to an ordinary person, but slowly and respectfully.

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What is the reason of this extraordinary conduct of the son-in-law towards his wife's mother? The Khosa Native who gave me this last information said: "A wise man will carefully observe the bukoñwana rules, because, if he hurts his parents-in-law by infringing them, they will not give him his tinamu as wives." This is true, but the same may be said of all the taboos of the bukoñwana, and the mother-in-law is not the principal person to be consulted on the question. Another more profound reason was once alluded to by an old Thonga, of Spelonken, Abraham Mabanyini, who said to me: "I fear my mother-in-law because I shall never marry her: Such a thing has never been seen." This statement has been confirmed since by information gathered in the Maputju clan. Notice the almost reflex action of the mother-in-law in covering her breasts when she sees her son-in-law coming unexpectedly. It shows that there is a sexual element in the behaviour of the woman and also in that of the man, who hides his face in order not to see her in her half nakedness. Dr. Rivers, who has met exactly the same rites of avoidance amongst the Melanesians, supposes that they are dictated by a more or less unconscious desire on the part of both these persons to fight against the temptation to have sexual relations with each other. Bantus also, in the course of the evolution of the family, have come to the deep conviction that such intercourse is bad and must

APPENDIX I (See p. 31)

Characteristics of the six dialects of the Thonga language.

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115 In the accompanying table I have compiled a list of characteristic words in the six main dialects of the Thonga language. The Ronga and Djonga lists have been made by myself, and represent those dialects as spoken in the Mpfumo and Nkuna clans. The population south of Delagoa Bay speaks a kind of sub-dialect of the Ronga, the Lwandle or Maputju. (Abbr. Map.). I owe to the Rev. L. Perrin the peculiar forms found in that district. The Rev. P. Loze of Lourenço Marques compiled for me the list of the Hlanganu equivalents, as they are met with in the Nwamba clans. They are not very different from the Djonga. Probably the dialect of Hlanganu proper, in the Lebombo Hills, would show greater differences. The Rev. H. Guye, who resided in Khosen and in Shikhumbane (Lower Limpopo Valley), provided me with a Djonga-Khosa list, very similar to the Nkuna and with the characteristic forms of the Bila dialect (Station of Shikhumbane, 15 miles west of Chai-Chai), also of the Hlengwe as spoken in the Khambana District, on the eastern border of the Lower Limpopo (Kh.). The Hlengwe, being so extensively spoken, possesses many sub-dialects. The Rev. S. Malale, a Native minister, compiled the characteristic forms of the Tshauke (Tsh.) region and those of the Madzibi tribe (Madz.) dwelling in the hinterland of Inhambane. The American missionaries have already published many books in the Tswa sub-dialect spoken in the vicinity of Inhambane, so I have also been able to mention a few Tswa forms. Lastly I owe to the same Rev. S. Malale the Nwalungu forms, those of Maluleke as well as those of the Ba-ka-Baloyi (Bal.) proper, and, in addition, those of the Hlabi (Hl.), which are very similar to the Djonga.

197 The orthography employed in these lists is that which the Swiss missionaries adopted for the Vocabulary and Grammar of the Thonga-Shangaan language. (Bridel, Lausanne 1908.) For our missionary books, we have always used the excellent and scientific system of Lepsius, with its two main principles: a letter must always have the same value, and a single sound must be represented by a single letter.

524 Here is one more which has a more philosophical character and which may be of later origin.

Leshi nga hamba Tilo ni Misaba, hi tshini? — Ntumbuluko!
The thing which made Heaven and Earth, what is it? — Nature!

Ntumbuluko comes from ku tumbuluka, to be created, to appear, and is well translated by the word Nature (See Part VI, Chapter I).

The Thongas possess a plentiful supply of *riddles containing two statements*, which they call *psitekatekisana* and of which I have collected about a hundred. I could easily have found ten times as many. One of our female neighbours (Lishanyi) knew a great number of these and could pour them forth without stopping well on into the night.

Whoever is most expert at asking questions takes the lead, and commences with a kind of invocation of which I have not been able to discover the meaning: Nwanyanga mintjuti, lit. son of the moon, shadows. Then addressing one of the other players, and speaking very rapidly, he (or she) will say: "Teka, teka, teka (take, guess) heeee...!" following this up with the question to be asked, which forms the first part of the riddle; the person addressed must immediately reply with the phrase forming the second part. If he is unable to answer, or gives a wrong reply, the questioner says: "Psi ku hlulile" — "you are beaten," and passes on to another player, again beginning with "teka, teka, teka" and asking the same question until some one is able to give the correct rejoinder. Hence the name of this game, *psitekatekisana*, i. e. things which you make others guess.

It will be seen that we are not here dealing with riddles in the true sense of the word, with solutions only to be arrived at by keenness of thought and reflection; the answers to these must be learnt by heart, and it only requires a good memory to become an adept at the game. The ancestors, however, who composed the riddles, and handed them down to posterity, were by no means lacking in wit and ingenuity. The examples given below I owe mostly to Timotheo Mandlati, a Nkuna of Shiluvane, who wrote them down for me in the dialect of his own tribe; some of

them are in Hlengwe. I also obtained a good many from my 115
 Ronga informants, Spoon and Galu of Libombo, Titus, and 524
 Shilati, a blind man who thought himself very learned in the
 "riddling art," but understood very little of what he was talking
 about, and, in any case, was quite unable to give any explanation of
 his riddles. Some are the common property of both Ba-Ronga 524
 and Ba-Nkuna; they seem to be very popular throughout the
 Thonga tribe.

To begin with, here are some examples of which *the inner meaning is not difficult to discover* :

Teka-teka-teka-be! Tiba ro pahya hi matlhelo? — Ndlopfu yi fa hi tahembeti.
 The lake dries up at the edges? — The elephant is killed by a small arrow.

A great result (the drying up of a lake, the death of an elephant)
 is often produced by a very small cause (the gradual evaporation
 of water at the edges, a little arrow). The idea is similar to that
 expressed in the proverb: "Il ne faut pas mépriser les petits
 commencements," or "small beginnings make great endings."

Ndja ha batla mpalala? — Ndja ha hleketela...
 I am still carving an iron wood stick? — I am still thinking about it.

An undecided man might reply thus to those urging him to
 immediate action. The wood of the *mpalala* is extremely hard.
 "It is a long business to carve a figure of this wood" says the
 cunning fellow; "I am not going to make up my mind about
 it in a hurry!"

Ndji pfumala tshati; nha ndji ya tjhema nhonga?
 — Ndji pfumala nthambi; nha ndji ya lobola muahu lweyo.
 I have no axe, or I would go and cut a stick?
 — I have no oxen, or I would go and lobola this girl.

This is the sigh of the impecunious lover. In the first sentence
 he laments the want of an ordinary every-day object (an axe)
 which prevents his obtaining something he wishes for (a stick);
 he lets it be understood that a much more precious article
 is lacking (oxen, money, a lobolo) which would enable him
 to obtain something infinitely more to be desired (the girl he
 loves).

Hlangwini wa ka Shithelane; hi ba ka Nkandamuri; hi ba ka Manyubele ni Mbowo; hi ba ka Gidjigidji, ba tilo. —. Akane ka paitjunga! Lomu nkobeni mi ta muka hi kona...

Hlangwini of (the house of) Shithelane; we are of (the house of) Nkandamuri; we are of (the house of) Manyubele and Mbowo; we are of (the house of) Gidjigidji, the people of Heaven. —. Build (your huts) on the hills. In the valley you will have to leave(?)

It would seem that these Hlangwinis are a clan of rain-makers, people having the power of Heaven. They advise others to settle on the hills and not in the valleys, because otherwise their huts would be swept away by the floods, owing to the terrible rains which the Hlangwinis have the power of causing to fall.

The second is not very refined, but is characteristic. Erotic allusions are frequent in those formulae :

Nkuna wa Mabutane; mabuta, ba yi bonile ku basa ka yona.

Nkuna of Mabutane; when wooing a girl, he has seen that she was pure.

Mabutane is probably a surname of Nkuna. There is in this formula a play on the word buta which means to woo (I. p. 101). Before choosing a girl, the ancestor first made sure that she was untouched; this denotes a species of wisdom which his descendants still boast of to-day!

In epic poetry may be included also the *pshiphato*, a Zulu expression which means the laudatory sentence with which warriors praise themselves according to the Zulu fashion. Private individuals, and even women sometimes have their shiphato; for instance a girl bearing the name of Yandea will glorify herself in these words: Yandea, madjaha! Yandea, the young men! This formula does not throw a very favourable light on the habits of the girl, and scarcely belongs to literature!

A more elaborate product of Thonga poetry is found in the *hunting songs*. I have already mentioned these (p. 60) and here give as a typical example the Elephant's song. I have been told by my informant, Zebedeia Mbenyana, a Native of Bilen, that the hunters performed it whilst dancing on the body of the enormous beast, after having transfixed it.

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